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University of Dayton Receives $405,000 NSF Grant to Support Women Doctoral Students in Engineering

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UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON RECEIVES $405,000 NSF GRANT TO SUPPORT WOMEN DOCTORAL STUDENTS IN ENGINEERING

DAYTON, Ohio--The University of Dayton, one of the nation's top universities for women who are in engineering degree programs, has received a five-year, $405,000 grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF) to provide annual support for three women doctoral students in graduate materials engineering.

The NSF grant was awarded to UD in recognition of its strong graduate program in titanium metallurgy and experience in recruiting women engineering students, according to Daniel Eylon, the principal investigator of the program.

With the five-year NSF grant, UD's School of Engineering will support three women materials engineering doctoral candidates each year engaged in the study and research of titanium alloy casting technology under the direction of Eylon, a professor of chemical and materials engineering. Titanium, one of the backbone materials of the aerospace industry, has a unique combination of light weight, high strength and excellent corrosion resistance. Many future aerospace and industrial programs depend on the development of improved titanium alloys with lower cost.

The titanium and titanium casting technology program at UD is the only graduate research program in the nation exclusively dedicated to titanium technology. The program has resulted in more than 30 patents over the last five years. This year Eylon received the UD Alumni Award in Scholarship as

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a recognition for his contributions in the area of titanium research.

One of the NSF students is Peg Jones, 29, who just re-entered the academic world "to pursue a dream" after eight years as a materials engineer at GE Aircraft Engines in Cincinnati. "The NSF grant takes away any excuse I might have had in deciding to go for a doctoral degree," said Jones. "With my savings and my (campus) job working for Dr. Eylon, financially I could have stayed maybe two years. Now I can't wimp out on the basis of finances." Jones is working on a titanium casting project at UD sponsored by the Edison Materials Technology Center (EMTEC).

Kim Trick, a resident of Vandalia, will serve in another of the NSF spots. The 29-year-old mother of two, currently a doctoral candidate at UD, has been working on computer models to be used for titanium-related experiments and processes in the laboratory. "I'm pretty much finished with my course work, so this will allow me to work on my dissertation and to pursue the computer model further," she said.

The third student to be sponsored by the NSF grant has not been chosen.

UD is instituting in conjunction with this grant a new Women in Graduate Engineering Studies (WINGES) program to promote, recruit and support women in advanced engineering studies. The NSF doctoral candidates will work in conjunction with the WINGES program to encourage undergraduate engineering women students to pursue advanced degrees. The women will serve as counselors to undergraduate students considering advanced study and take an active role in WINGES seminars and panel discussions.

The WINGES program will expand UD's long-term commitment of support of women in engineering studies. Since its inception in 1974, UD's Women in

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Engineering (WIE) program for high school students has propelled the University to a leading position in recruitment and retention of women students in engineering, according to Carol Shaw, associate dean of the School of Engineering. Twenty-three percent, twice the national average, of UD's School of Engineering full-time undergraduate students are women, and women constitute 14 percent of UD's graduate students in engineering, more than the national average of 12.8 percent, according to 1990-91 enrollment statistics from universities across the country.

UD's enrollment of women in engineering degree programs has outpaced the national average each year since 1974. More than 1,200 women have graduated from UD's WIE program, and 65 percent have enrolled in engineering programs.

"The number of Americans going into technical careers has been dropping and we are calling upon women to fill that void," said Shaw. "There is a significant demand for people with graduate degrees and women should be pursuing that opportunity."

The newly instituted WINGES program will offer support to women in graduate engineering programs by offering such services as child care, spouse placement, home computers and personal and professional support.

The University of Dayton is a private, coeducational school founded and sponsored by the Society of Mary (Marianists), a Roman Catholic teaching order. UD is the largest independent university in Ohio and the eighth largest Catholic university in the nation. Approximately 11,000 graduate and undergraduate students currently attend UD.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: For media interviews, contact Daniel Eylon at (513) 229-2552; Peg Jones at (513) 874-9282; Kim Trick at (513) 898-7729; and Carol Shaw at (513) 229-4606.